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# Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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## Newsletter #45 - April 2016

1. LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY
2. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES - CAMPED ON A FROZEN SEA
3. "GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY WEEKEND - 16-17 April
4. PROGRAMME FOR 2016
5. QUOTE OF THE MONTH
- 6-9. MENTORING, MEETINGS & TUITION

*This newsletter goes out to many photographers in New Zealand and overseas - and to anybody who asks to go onto the mailing list. If you know anybody who would like to be on the mailing list, please get them to email me. It's free and they can unsubscribe at any time, of course.*



Capturing the essence of Antarctica was never going to be an easy task, but it was a challenge I accepted with considerable enthusiasm. The wildness, purity, and beauty were on my side. Against me were arrayed various technical and logistical challenges [the weather, the cold, getting anywhere, staying safe, keeping cameras going in brutally-freezing temperatures and blizzards] but even more importantly – how do you photograph cold? How do you photograph wind? How do you photograph vastness? How do you photograph purity or silence? How can you possibly capture in a single photo both the beauty and the extremes that are Antarctica? This photo says little about the vastness, but does say something about the cold, the wind, the rawness, and the beauty.

## 1. EXTRACTIVE LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Many of the best landscape photographs are taken with wide angle lenses, and typically feature a foreground, middle ground and background [distance], with all the elements coming together in a pleasing composition, and overall giving both a sense of three-dimensionality and the character [or essence, or soul] of the place. Wide angle is my favourite approach to landscape photography, but complementing it is a totally different approach, one I call “Extractive Landscape Photography”.

A quick web search tells me that no-one else seems to use that name, but it seems the right name to me. It’s a technique I use often, for “extracting” a number of different landscape photos without moving my feet much, if at all.

One of the ways of becoming a better landscape photographer – or any other kind of photographer – is training yourself to see more than just the one or two obvious photos in front of you. It’s a similar concept to “Working the Subject” which most good outdoor photographers employ: when photographing a worthwhile subject, photographing it from different positions [e.g. from in front, from left or right, behind it, above it, below it, using different lenses [wide angle, telephoto], different depths of field [everything sharp, only the subject sharp], waiting for different lighting and so on.

In “Extractive Landscape Photography”, you typically don’t have to move your feet much, if at all – your telephoto lenses [sometimes your normal zoom lens too] do the work for you. Telephoto lenses let you “extract” distant parts of the landscape from the surrounding landscape. As an added bonus, telephoto compression creates a dramatic sense of scale, so these photos will have a different look to your wide angle landscape photos.

You don’t need a big 500mm+ wildlife telephoto lens for this kind of photo, anywhere from 100-300mm will do the job admirably. The photos here were all taken from the exact same spot over a 90 minute period. My van was parked at the lookout overlooking Piha Beach that many of you will know well. I know the photos were all taken from the exact same spot because I was up on the metre-square



photo platform on the roof rack of my van. I arrived shortly after midday, so I wasn't going to get any great sunset colours [they would come later, down on the beach] but the clouds were moving quite fast, creating ever-changing patterns of sunlight and shadow on the sea.

All these photos except one were telephoto shots, 130-420mm [300mm lens with 1.4x extender]. After 90 minutes, just as I was getting ready to go, a vanload of tourists parked in front of me, came back and stood along the side of my van. A quick lens change allowed me to grab a wide angle photo [17mm] of the overall landscape plus the tourists.



## 2. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES – CAMPED ON A FROZEN SEA

In Antarctica, even simple tasks attain new, sometimes unexpected, levels of difficulty. Like putting tent pegs in the ground. The “ground” here was sea ice, as hard as concrete under a thin covering of snow. And strong enough that three weeks later I would watch the world’s second-largest aircraft – a US Airforce Galaxy C5 – land on this same two-metre thick sea ice within sight of where we were trying to pitch our tents. A fully laden Galaxy weighs 300 tonnes, but when it is sitting on the sea ice, its wheels depress the ice only 70-80mm. The seafloor is a further 400 metres down through clear, cold, dark water.



Sea ice strong and hard enough to land a Galaxy C-5 safely on wasn't going to let us put tent pegs into it without a good fight. Each blow from our small sledge hammers onto a tent peg would shatter the ice into thousands of tiny fragments. And the peg might reluctantly be driven in another millimetre or two. Or not.

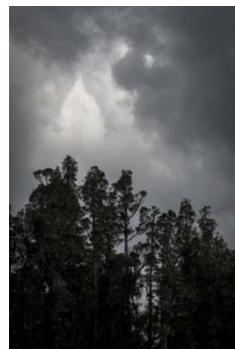


I was with five members of the Scott Base winter-over team on a pre-season sea ice reconnaissance trip from Scott Base across the frozen McMurdo Sound. It was spring. The sun was now up above the horizon for much of the day but the nights were still dark. A great time for photography. During the four months of summer when the sun wheels around and around an endless sky, everything is blue, bluish white, bluish black, and bluish brown, with no sunrises or sunsets. But spring is cold too. Out on the sea ice temperatures hovered about 25-30 degrees below zero.

Our destination that day had been Butter Point on the Antarctic mainland, but our Hagglands all-terrain vehicle had thrown a con rod through the side of its engine and died. It wouldn't drive again until parts could be flown down from New Zealand when the summer flights started, still three weeks away. Tomorrow we would be towed back to Scott Base by another Hagglands, but tonight we slept in our tents on the sea ice.

Pedro turned a sledge on its side to form a windbreak, and got the stove going. Awhile later, dinner was served. Spaghetti bolognese, created by Wendy back at Scott Base and now reheated. Hot, wonderfully hot. At least the first few mouthfuls were hot. By the time I was halfway through it was stone cold. I never made it to the far side of the plate – my spaghetti bolognese there was now just a solid icy lump frozen to the plate.

### 3. "GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY WEEKEND" 16-17 April



If you're thinking something like "hmmm, maybe I'd like to go to one of Kim's workshops sometime, but which one?" then this is the one I'd most recommend. Over two days it covers enough to inspire you for the next 12 months and well beyond. And it's different from all the other workshops I run. Instead of covering just nature photography, we spread our wings wider, touching on most of the topics covered in my workshops & tuition over the last 9 years, but also including people, travel and weddings. "Will I learn a lot?" "Yep". "Will it be fun?" "I'm afraid so!"

This is the biggest workshop I run, **a full weekend of workshops and field trips, followed by an assignment and an evaluation evening** about 3 weeks later at a time that suits everyone. Learning is via many paths: a creative mix of modules with detailed hand-outs, live demonstrations, screen-projected images, questions answered, and taking real photos in the field.

### Topics include:

- Landscapes & seascapes
- Photographing people
- Travel photography
- Composition, depth of field
- Which lens to use? Telephoto vs. normal vs. wide angle. Using each for best effect
- Wedding photography
- Going professional or semi-professional - or not
- Photo competitions – should you enter? What do the judges look for?
- Copyright, legal stuff, model and property releases
- Specialised techniques for night/dusk photography and aerial photography
- "Secrets of the pros"
- Digital workflow, backing up, archiving
- That troublesome triangle of ISO/aperture/shutter speed - often not understood well [if at all] but absolutely vital if you want real control over your photography
- Photoshop & Lightroom – an introduction to
- Manual or Auto or ....?
- What makes powerful photos powerful?
- Harnessing & developing your creativity
- Silky waterfalls, long exposure photos
- Dealing with problem foregrounds... and more

Westerskov



Photography

**\*\* Cost: \$475.** Great value, I believe. The Early Bird special is even better value - **\$425 if you book before midnight on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April [this newsletter is out a bit later than I'd hoped, so I've extended the Early Bird deadline a bit].** The price includes the workshop, follow-up, detailed hand-outs, and yummy catering [courtesy of Vivienne] on both days. **You will feel well looked after.** Special rate for **fulltime students** with ID **\$235.**

For anyone living outside the Tauranga area, there are three good motels within 8 minutes' walk of Kim's studio. The workshops are held at Kim's comfortable studio at 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

## 4. PROGRAM FOR 2016

### APRIL

- Tuesday 5 April. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday-Sunday 16-17 April. "Great Photography Weekend"**. Weekend plus follow-up.
- Thursday 21 April. 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below

### MAY

- Tuesday 3 May. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- Thursday 19 May. 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below
- **Saturday 21 May. "Wildlife Photography" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### JUNE

- Tuesday 7 June. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- Thursday 16 June 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below
- **Sunday 26 June. "Black & White Photography" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

### JULY

- Tuesday 5 July. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 16 July. "Macro & Close Up – with or without a macro lens" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Thursday 21 July 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below

### AUGUST

- Tuesday 2 August. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 14 August. "Photo Impressionism" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Thursday 18 August. 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below

### SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 6 September. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 10 September. "Landscape Photography" workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Thursday 15 September. 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 4 October. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday-Sunday 8-9 October. "Great Photography Weekend" workshop.** Weekend plus follow-up.
- Thursday 20 October. 7.00pm. "In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition". Details below.

### NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 1 November. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

- **Sunday 6 November. “Good photos, great photos – Anytime, Anywhere” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Thursday 17 November. 7.00pm. “In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition”. Details below

## DECEMBER

- Tuesday 6 December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

## 5. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

For me, photography and music are more closely related than might be obvious at first glance. Music – as well as Fine Art – influences my photography, and has done so for a long time. This month’s quote is from one great musician, Mark Knopfler [Dire Straits] talking about another great musician, Bob Dylan. Knopfler produced Dylan’s 1983 album “Infidels”. Mark’s words here apply just as much to photography – a photographer doesn’t have to be great technically, as long as his/her photographs have **soul**. “How do I get soul into my photography?” is easy enough to ask, but not easy to answer. That doesn’t stop it being perhaps the single most important question we photographers can ask ourselves.

Mark Knopfler: “[Bob Dylan is] an absolute genius. As a singer - absolute genius. But musically, I think it’s a lot more basic. The music just tends to be a vehicle for that poetry.”

”Bob’s musical ability is limited, in terms of being able to play a guitar or a piano,” said Knopfler. ”It’s rudimentary, but it doesn’t affect his variety, his sense of melody, his singing. It’s all there. In fact, some of the things he plays on piano while he’s singing are lovely, even though they’re rudimentary. That all demonstrates the fact that **you don’t have to be a great technician. It’s the same old story: If something is played with soul, that’s what’s important.**”

## 6. MENTORING

“Mentoring” is a bit hard to define exactly, but it’s **the ongoing process of inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing** ... whatever is needed for the ongoing development of a photographer. It’s one-on-one, so it’s different for each person, as every photographer’s needs are different. One month it may be about equipment or Photoshop, next month it may be “I just want my photos to have more ‘Wow’ in them”, the following month it may be about exhibitions or “Should I go pro?”



Photos of Kim by Malcolm Macfarlane & Tony Whitehead

Being mentored is possibly the fastest and most rewarding way of progressing rapidly. It’s at

your pace and at your level. And I try hard to be as supportive and positive as possible. I've designed it to be both affordable and flexible, so to begin with I'm offering "Mentoring by Kim" as a monthly subscription - you can try it and see if it's what you want. If it is, we continue, fine-tuning as needed. If not, then you pull out at the end of the first month. Every month you have a one-on-one meeting with me, discussing whatever you want. My 30+ years' experience as a professional photographer & writer is there, ready to help and [hopefully] inspire you. Your questions are answered, options are discussed, photography techniques or approaches are taught, your photos critiqued, new ideas suggested. This is either in person or by phone.

I'm offering three levels of "Mentoring by Kim":

1. Everything listed above, with 90 minutes "one-on-one" every month. \$115/month.
2. Everything listed above, with 3 hours "one-on-one" every month. \$165/ month.
3. Everything listed above, with 4 hours "one-on-one" every month. \$200/ month.

Your mentor [me, Kim]:

- Over 30 years as a professional photographer
- Five First Prizes in the BBC "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" competition, the Olympics of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published – written and photographed by me. 12 are currently "in print".
- Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.

## 7. IN-DEPTH PHOTO EVALUATION & TUITION EVENINGS

A good and cost-effective way of moving your photography ahead rapidly. Think of these evenings as a cross between private tuition and workshops, with lots of targeted feedback based entirely on **YOUR photos**. You bring along some photos you'd like evaluated and I critique them, both plusses and minuses, in considerable depth. Not just "how can we improve this photo in Photoshop or Lightroom?", but what can you learn about photographing a similar subject next time: maybe changing the timing, lens selection, depth of field, aperture/ISO/shutter speed choice, composition, lighting etc. – anything and everything that helps **you on the road towards better and better photos**.

The next In-Depth Evening will be on **Thursday 21 April**, starting at 7.00pm. Book by email. Cost: \$55 for the evening.

## 8. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [every month of the year except January], chat informally about photography, and view some of the recent photos we've taken. It's **free [no charge], supper is served**, and there's no obligation of any kind. **Please email me if you'd like to come** [it's not a big room so I need to keep an eye on numbers]. These evenings are always fun and friendly - there's usually many smiles and laughs. It's a great way of meeting up with like-minded people, **being inspired by the creativity of our group of photographers, and coming away with news ideas and tips**. There's a wide range of

interests and abilities – so for those of you who have not been before, you're very unlikely to feel out of your depth. There's also a small "library" of photo magazines you are welcome to borrow from. Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to bring any. Some people do, some don't.

The April and May evenings are on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April** and **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**, starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

## **9. PRIVATE TUITION**

Yes, like you I'm usually busy doing "other stuff" too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and am very happy to do so [I enjoy teaching and mentoring 😊]. So – if you'd like some tuition, give me a yell. First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour [forever!]

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